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TAGS: TECH

SUBJECT: ENERGY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

REPORT TO CONGRESS: BEGIN UNDERLINE NATIONAL

ENERGY R & D PLAN: CREATING CHOICES FOR THE
FUTURE END UNDERLINE

1. SUBJECT REPORT RELEASED BY ERDA JUNE 30. REPRESENTS A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PLAN FOR ENERGY R & D AND DEMONSTRATION DEALING WITH NEAR TERM, MID-TERM, AND LONG TERM ENERGY NEEDS AS WELL AS DETAILED PROGRAM TO IMPLEMENT PLAN.

2. REPORT CONSIDERED TO BE FOUNDATION FOR US NATIONAL ENERGY R & D STRATEGY. AS REQUIRED BY LAW IT WILL BE UPDATED JANUARY 1976 AND ON ANNUAL BASIS THEREAFTER. DESIGNED FOR USE BY CONGRESS, INDUSTRY, UNIVERSITIES AND PUBLIC AS INDICATION OF ENERGY R & D NEEDS AND GOVERNMENTAL PLANS TO MEET THESE NEEDS.

3. VOLUME I DESCRIBES NATIONAL ENERGY R & D AND DEMONSTRATION PLAN RECOMMENDED BY ERDA. INCLUDES DISCUSSION OF STATE OF TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBLE ENERGY CONTRIBUTION OF

EACH ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ENERGY SOURCE. ALSO CONTAINS DISCUSSION OF AREAS OF UNCERTAINTY WHICH MAY INFLUENCE NATURE OF FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS. VOLUME II CONTAINS MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.

4. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS - A SERIOUS AND CONTINUING ENERGY PROBLEM EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY.

-- TODAY'S PROBLEM ONE OF LIMITED CHOICE.

-- OVER 3/4 OF CURRENT ENERGY NEEDS SATISFIED BY OIL AND GAS, WHOSE DOMESTIC PRODUCTION IS DECLINING, AND OF WHICH ONLY LIMITED RESOURCES REMAIN FOR FUTURE PRODUCTION.

-- INSUFFICIENT USE BEING MADE OF ENERGY SOURCES OF UNCLASSIFIED

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MUCH GREATER DOMESTIC ABUNDANCE -- COAL, SHALE, NUCLEAR, AND SOLAR.

-- THE MISMATCH BETWEEN USE AND RESOURCES, AND RESULTING DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS, JEOPARDIZES THE POLICY INDEPENDENCE AND THE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF COUNTRY.

THE U.S. NEEDS TO SHIFT TO NEW PRIMARY FORMS OF ENERGY PRODUCTION. SUCH A MAJOR SHIFT HAS ALREADY OCCURRED TWICE BEFORE IN OUR HISTORY.

-- FROM WOOD FUELS IN THE MID-1800S TO COAL IN THE EARLY 1900S AND THEN FROM COAL TO OIL AND GAS.

-- TWO EARLIER SHIFTS EACH TOOK 60 YEARS TO ACCOMPLISH THE PRESENTLY NEEDED SHIFT IN FUEL USE.

ABILITY TO SHORTEN THE TRANSITION TIME WILL DEPEND ON THE FULL USE OF ALL AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY AND UPON THE RAPID COMMERCIALIZATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY.

-- THE RD&D PROGRAM WILL BE KEY MECHANISM IN OPENING UP CHOICES FOR THE FUTURE.

-- MULTI-PRONGED AND AGGRESSIVE APPROACH IS NEEDED TO REDUCE THE RISKS AND TO ACHIEVE THE BENEFITS OF SUCCESSFUL NEW TECHNOLOGIES AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATES.

THE R&D TARGET MUST EXCEED PERCEIVED NEEDS BY SUBSTANTIAL FACTOR TO ALLOW FOR INEVITABLE R&D FAILURES -- WHETHER TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, OR SOCIAL. SENSE OF URGENCY IS MANDATORY IN THE CONDUCT OF THE PROGRAM. MAJOR LINES OF APPROACH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. FOR

NEAR-TERM (NOW TO 1985) AND BEYOND, THE PRIORITIES ARE:

-- TO PRESERVE AND EXPAND MAJOR EXISTING ENERGY SYSTEMS: COAL, LIGHT WATER REACTORS (THE HIGHEST NUCLEAR PRIORITY), AND GAS AND OIL FROM NEW SOURCES AND ENHANCED RECOVERY TECHNIQUES.

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TO INCREASE EFFORTS ON CONSERVATION, TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF ENERGY USE IN ALL SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY AND TO EXTRACT MORE USABLE ENERGY FROM WASTE MATERIALS.

FOR MID-TERM (1985 TO 2000) AND BEYOND PRIORITIES ARE:

-- TO ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROCESSES TO PRODUCE SYNTHETIC FUELS FROM COAL, AND TO EXTRACT OIL FROM SHALE.

-- TO INCREASE USE OF UNDERUSED FUEL FORMS SUCH AS GEOTHERMAL, SOLAR FOR HOME HEATING AND COOLING, AND EXTRACTION OF MORE USABLE ENERGY FROM WASTE HEAT.

FOR FAR-TERM (PAST 2000) PRIORITIES ARE:

-- TO PURSUE VIGOROUSLY CANDIDATE TECHNOLOGIES WHICH WILL LET US USE ESSENTIALLY INEXHAUSTIBLE RESOURCES:

- NUCLEAR BREEDER.

- FUSION.

- SOLAR ELECTRIC THROUGH VARIETY OF TECHNOLOGICAL
OPTIONS EXTENDING FROM WIND POWER THROUGH
THERMAL AND PHOTOVOLTAIC APPROACHES TO USE
OF OCEAN THERMAL GRADIENTS.

-- NONE OF ABOVE TECHNOLOGIES ARE ASSURED FOR LARGE
SCALE APPLICATION. ALL HAVE UNIQUE UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS
IN ONE OR MORE AREAS: TECHNICAL, ECONOMICAL, ENVIRON-
MENTAL OR SOCIAL. BENEFITS TO BE GAINED IN ACHIEVING
SUCCESS IN ONE OR MORE OF THESE APPROACHES REQUIRE THAT
VIGOROUS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS PROCEED NOW ON ALL THREE.

-- TO PROVIDE TECHNOLOGIES TO USE THE NEW SOURCE OF
ENERGY WHICH MAY BE DISTRIBUTED AS ELECTRICITY, HYDROGEN
OR OTHER FORMS THROUGHOUT ALL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

MID- AND LONG-TERM TARGETS REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL EFFORT
TODAY TO PERMIT SIGNIFICANT ENERGY CONTRIBUTION TO BE
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ACHIEVED IN DESIRED TIMEFRAME.

IN SUMMARY, TODAY'S NATIONAL RD&D ACTIVITIES MUST BE
DESIGNED TO:

-- SHORTEN THE TIME FOR TRANSITION TO NEW FUEL FORMS
BASED ON ABUNDANT DOMESTIC FUEL RESOURCES.

-- AVOID OVEREMPHASIS ON SINGLE APPROACHES WHICH
TEND TO FORECLOSE FUTURE OPTIONS.

-- OPEN UP NEW CHOICES FOR THE FUTURE.

5. EXPLANATORY MATERIAL IS BEING AIR POUCHED. A LIMITED
NUMBER OF COPIES OF VOLUME I OF THE REPORT CAN BE
SENT ON REQUEST. VOLUME II IS NOT YET AVAILABLE. SISCO

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